Norms for allotment of STD/ISD PCOs

1667. SHRI BASHISTHA NARAIN SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether any norms have been laid down for allotment of STD/ISD PCOs in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have received any complaints about allotment of PCOs in the recent past; and

(d) if so, the corrective steps taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. According to the present policy, PCOs are allotted liberally to all applicants who are of 18 years and above without any restriction of educational qualifications subject to technical feasibility and completion of commercial formalities.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir, Some complaints have been received in this regard. Action, as per the guidelines, has been initiated. PCOs allotted to handicapped persons on fraudulent documents are disconnected.

Quality of Telecom Service

1668. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHONOLGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the overall level of quality of service in the Indian Telecom Sector has been found to be poor despite registering impressive growth in the past few years;

(b) if so, whether the TRAI has found in its first survey on quality standards that private operators were providing comparatively better quality of service than BSNL and MTNL;

(c) if so, the details of the said survey report; and

(d) the action taken by Government to improve the quality of service in the Indian Telecom Sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) Sir, the survey conducted by TRAI through M/s. Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) during October–December 2001, has revealed that most of the Telecom service providers were not meeting the prescribed benchmarks on quality of service.

(b) In its first quarterly survey report on quality standards, TRAI has found that none of the basic operators were meeting the quality of service (QOS) norms stipulated in the QOS regulations of TRAI. As per the survey, the private operators who operate in vastly different scale of operation and have hardly any significant presence in the rural areas where the problems of maintenance are more complex, have been able to provide comparatively better quality of services than MTNL & BSNL. Also, while MTNL & BSNL have the legacy equipment, the private operators have latest technology equipment and gadgets. Noticeably, TRAI survey has also found that the five best performers in the area of basic services on the basis of weighted average score for various customers satisfaction parameters, are the MTNL, Mumbai and four circles of BSNL *viz.* Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.

(c) As part of the TRAI's mandate to conduct periodical surveys for determining quality of Telecom services in the country, the Authority had selected M/s. Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB), a well established research organisation to perform the following two functions:

> objective assessment of quality for service provided by both basic as well as cellular service providers with reference to the Quality of service (QOS) standards prescribed by the TRAI.

> Subjective survey of the level of consumer satisfaction with the services.

The first quarterly survey was carried out during the period from October to December 2001. A sample size of 317 exchanges of basic service operators and all cellular service operators were covered in the survey. The overall performance of the basic service operators were

assesed on the basis of some select parameters such as customer complaints on phone faults, percentage of new connections given in fifteen days, shifting completed within five days, closures in 24 hours, level of operator service response, average time taken to attend customer complaints, percantage of bills disputed by customers etc. In the case of cellular services, besides fault and billing complaints percentage of calls dropped during conversation, percentage of calls with good quality of voice were some of the parameters measured.

The consumers surveyed generally felt that the overall quality of service needs to be improved. Level of satisfaction regarding service provision, network performance and help services were found to be very low. The survey findings also suggest that none of the basic operators including the incumbents, are meeting the QOS norms stipulated in the QOS regulations.

(d) Actions being taken by BSNL & MTNL to improve quality of Telecom. Services. Improvement in the quality of service is a continuous process. Following steps are being taken by BSNL & MTNL to improve the basic services :

(i) Replacement of underground paper core cables by Jelly filled cables.

(ii) Lying of cables in ducts.

(iii) Laying of underground cables right up to the subscribes premises so as to eliminate drop wires. Introduction of 5 pair undergorund cable is one such move in this regard.

(iv) Opening of more and more remote line units thereby reducing area to be served by each exchange with a corresponding reduction in the size of the outdoor plant.

(v) Replacement of old telephone instruments.

(vi) Introduction of new technology *e.g.* Wireless in Local Loop, DLC, etc. to eliminate the need for underground cables.

(vii) Periodic dressing of external plant.

(viii) Pagers to line staff/field staff wherever feasible.

(ix) Monitoring of faults by senior officers.

(x) Arrangement for fault booking on 198 centrally at Short

Distance Charging Centre (SDCC) on Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS).

(xi) Computerisation of Fault Repair Service (FRS) at more & more places.

In addition, MTNL is taking following steps to improve quality of Cellular Mobile Services :

(i) A dedicated network management group has been deployed.

(ii) Continuous monitoring through drive tests is being carried out and RF optimisation is done to improve RF signal strength.

(iii) The software bugs in billing system have been removed and regular bills are being issued.

(iv) To improve customer interface, a full fledged call centre with IVRS facility is being set up. In addition to existing three Customer Care Centres, another five Customer Care Centres are being opened.

(v) To facilitate the bill payment, billing counters have been opened in different localities. In addition, bill viewing and payment through Internet and cheque collections through drop boxes provided by Banks have also been arranged.

Regularisation of Data Entry Operators

1669. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Telecommunication and MTNL have been separated;

(b) whether Data Entry Operators have been working on contract basis in the Department of Telecommunication since February, 1999 and they have not been regularised, so far;

(c) whether Government would regularise their services; and

(d) if so, by when, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) MTNL is a public sector undertaking under the administrative control of Department of Telecommunication in the ministry of Communication & Information Technology.